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Wednesday, 22 November 2006, 10.45 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Voto-Bernales	(Peru)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Ghana	Mr. Yankey
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Bader
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott Sanders

Agenda

The situation in Africa

Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

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06-62675 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Africa

Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Egeland to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

The Security Council will now hear a briefing by Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Egeland: I have just concluded my fourth and final mission as Emergency Relief Coordinator to Darfur. I return with a plea from the beleaguered Darfurians for immediate action to finally stop the atrocities against them. For more than a thousand days and a thousand nights, the defenceless civilians of Darfur have been living in fear for their lives and the lives of their children. The Government's failure to protect its own citizens, even in areas where there are no rebels, has been shameful, and it continues. So does our own failure, more than a year after world leaders, meeting in this very building, pledged their own responsibility to protect civilians where Governments manifestly fail to do so.

When I went to Darfur on my first visit, in late June 2004, accompanying the Secretary-General, we saw a civilian population under attack, prompting the displacement of 1 million people. When I returned to Darfur last week, 4 million people — two-thirds of Darfur's population — were in need of emergency assistance. The number of internally displaced persons has risen to an unprecedented 2 million. Attacks on villages and the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians continue and have reached the horrific levels of early 2004.

Over the past three years the world has responded generously with emergency relief in Darfur. The achievements of the 14,000 Sudanese and international aid workers in Darfur, the world's largest humanitarian operation, have been nothing less than heroic. Against all odds, we have until recently been able to deliver relief to most of the affected. As a comprehensive survey showed in August, global malnutrition had been reduced by half since the height of the crisis in mid-2004, and mortality rates had fallen to 0.36 per 10,000 per day, well below the emergency thresholds. Seventy-three per cent of all Darfurians had access to safe drinking water. Moreover, 550,000 tons of food will be delivered this year alone.

But all of this is now at risk. Militia attacks and banditry have rendered more than 95 per cent of all roads in West Darfur no-go areas for the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As a result, an increasing number of camps are cut off from adequate and reliable assistance; in some instances, all basic humanitarian services have had to be shut down. Large new militias are being armed as we speak, while none are being disarmed, despite the demands and measures put in place by the Security Council in 2004 and 2005.

As the women from displaced-persons camps told me in El Geneina, the youngest and most reckless receive weapons and are recruited into militias. Government forces, militias, a plethora of rebel groups and an increasing number of Chadian armed opposition groups roam around freely inside and outside the camps, spreading terror and fear. New displacement is also fuelled by cross-border raids by armed groups which receive arms and safe haven on both sides of the Chad-Sudan border, thereby rapidly pushing the conflict towards a regional escalation.

All of this is happening with total impunity. Large parts of Darfur are seeing a meltdown of law and order. The traditional leaders whom I met have lost their influence on young men and armed groups, and they complained openly that the Government armed the new militias as the rebels got new arms from abroad.

All of this leaves the situation in West Darfur, and in Darfur at large, closer to the abyss than I have witnessed since my first visit in 2004. The following areas need to be addressed with the utmost urgency.

First, we need an immediate stop to all attacks, the cessation of hostilities and respect for the ceasefire by all parties.

Villages, camps and communities outside the urban centres of Darfur are again being burned and looted. Women and children are abused, raped and killed with impunity. Just 10 days ago the village of Sirba saw three attacks by Government forces and Arab militia that resulted in innocent civilians, mainly women and children, being killed and injured. I met some of the victims in the hospital of El Geneina. A mother told me how she held her two-year-old daughter in her arms as the child was wilfully shot in the neck by an armed man despite her repeated begging to spare her daughter. The wounded child did, as I could see, miraculously survive and is now recovering in the good care of local Sudanese doctors. Neither the Government nor the African Union was able or willing to show presence or deploy proactively in Sirba before the massacre, despite repeated warnings by villagers and aid workers of the impending attacks.

Just as I left the Sudan on Saturday, two massive military operations started in the Jebel Marra and Birmaza areas in North Darfur. A dozen villages were attacked and looted, driving more than 8,000 more innocent men, women and children from their homes and leaving many killed and injured. In the Birmaza area, huge amounts of livestock were stolen and houses were burned, deliberately depriving the population of their means of survival. In Jebel Marra, where up in the mountains the nights are freezing at this time of year, the attackers systematically looted food, clothing and blankets. This means that babies and small children who survived the attacks might now freeze to death. Let us be clear: these acts are crimes of the most despicable kind. They are an affront to humanity.

Secondly, we need the immediate and lasting implementation of all freedom of movement guarantees afforded by the Government of Sudan in the July 2004 moratorium, the Status of Mission Agreement and the Darfur Peace Agreement.

The rampant insecurity, proliferation of arms and banditry on roads have taken their toll on the delivery capacity of an increasingly beleaguered humanitarian community. Our colleagues in El Geneina told me how they had been forced to evacuate all operations from the Dorti camp, leaving 9,000 people without any assistance or protection whatsoever. Without armed escorts, dozens of humanitarian vehicles have been hijacked of late.

Three hours after I left El Geneina, a United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) vehicle with two United Nations volunteers was robbed at gunpoint by men in military camouflage between the town and the headquarters of the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS); the car remains in the hands of the hijackers. Humanitarian workers are being harassed, attacked and even killed. Just three days before my arrival, a World Food Programme driver died from injuries sustained in one such gun attack.

If this trend continues, if the world's largest humanitarian operation falters and if the lifeline for millions of civilians collapses, the situation in Darfur will spiral out of control. We will see a dramatic escalation of human suffering and loss of life beyond anything we have witnessed so far.

It is not only the insecurity that threatens our humanitarian operations. It is also the wall of administrative obstacles that the Government has slowly but surely rebuilt both in Khartoum and in Darfur that is strangling our operations. A quicksand of endless bureaucratic obstacles consumes most of the time of humanitarian relief managers. Some NGOs have half of their staff paralysed due to the lack of visas, work permits, stay permits or travel permits, or to any number of other obstacles. While all agencies and nationalities suffer from this, non-governmental organizations are targeted in particular — and United States aid workers as well. The United States has been by far our largest donor to the humanitarian operations in Darfur. Now 26 of 40 American NGO workers have been blocked from doing their relief work.

Relief workers of all nationalities have to be granted full access. The same is true for the journalists who cover our work and who report back to the donor communities about it. Two American journalists were blocked from travelling with me to Darfur. This is part of the wider effort by the Government to restrict access and reporting on Darfur by international and national journalists. Journalists have been detained, threatened with expulsion and harassed by a multitude of

Government authorities, particularly from the national security sector.

In brief, the moratorium on restrictions on aid operations in Darfur remains in place only in theory at the moment, as it is being completely undermined by the daily reality. This reality is summarized in the fact sheet before the Council, which I also shared with senior Government officials in Khartoum and in Darfur. I urge Council members to pursue these issues with the Government of the Sudan here in New York, in Khartoum and through other channels. These are not just bureaucratic issues. They threaten our entire relief operation.

The Council has previously spoken out in favour of one of the most established and respected NGOs that had been suspended by the Government before: the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). On top of its most recent suspension, the NRC has now received several letters confirming its complete expulsion from South Darfur. One letter demanded that the NRC immediately hand over all its assets to the Government. That would amount to confiscation of international property. The NRC has provided important services to several hundred thousand internally displaced persons (IDP) in South Darfur. Its expulsion and treatment should be protested by the Council and by members' representatives in Khartoum.

I was personally blocked by Sudanese national security officials from going to four out of six locations that I had previously agreed upon for my visit with the Government. I had intended to visit the Jebel Marra to send a strong message to the rebels to immediately stop the hostilities and support the ceasefire. My visit to Tawilla was to highlight the successful local work of AMIS, and my meeting with Musa Hilal, the Arab militia leader, was to protest attacks against the civilian population. Every one of those visits was blocked.

Each time I have travelled to the Sudan I have hoped to see a fundamental change in the attitude of the Government, an attitude that has been characterized by denial, neglect and the blaming of others. Yet again this time, I saw no such change, but rather a further entrenching of that attitude. Senior Government officials continue to deny the killings, the displacements and the rape of women.

My message to the Government, both in Khartoum and in West Darfur was, and is, "Help us to help your people; do not undermine our effectiveness; too many lives are at stake". I was pleased to receive verbal assurances from the Minister for Humanitarian Affairs that the moratorium on restrictions will be extended beyond the end of this year. However, six weeks before the moratorium is due to expire, that extension has yet to be formally announced to our aid agencies on the ground. I also agreed with the Minister to convene an in-depth review of working conditions for humanitarian organizations. At long last, that process started this morning with a constructive meeting with the humanitarian affairs commissioner. A technical committee with the line ministries, the United Nations and, if they so desire, NGOs will now address all current restrictions.

The next weeks may be a make-or-break period for our lifeline to more than 3 million people. This period may well be the last opportunity for the Council, the Government of the Sudan, the African Union, the rebels and all of us to avert a humanitarian disaster of much larger proportions than even the one we have witnessed in Darfur thus far. I hope that the agreement reached in Addis Ababa, on which the Secretary-General will brief the Council this afternoon, will mark a historic turning point to something better. As humanitarians, we pin high expectations on this agreement on a re-energized peace process, a strengthened ceasefire and effective peacekeeping.

Our fear is that time is now being lost in talks regarding the intricacies of the African Union/United Nations partnership rather than on the immediate deployment of a more effective force with a more proactive mandate. From my humanitarian perspective, the expectations for the force are as follows. It must have the mandate, resources, capabilities and willingness to deploy proactively to areas of risk for civilian populations, show presence where needed and protect civilian populations from attack and abhorrent acts of rape and sexual violence. It must be able to remain among the people when attacks are imminent. It must be able to investigate and report violations expeditiously. It must have the flexibility and mobility to respond to urgent requests for help from communities under threat — as should have been the case in Sirba, Birmaza and the Jebel Marra over the last 10 days alone. It must restart escorts of, or have a presence among, women and girls during the collection of firewood. If requested, it must be capable of facilitating the escort or protection of humanitarian

staff, assets and transports, including by patrolling key humanitarian corridors and access roads. And it must resolutely confront and address attempts to restrict their operational space or to impose restrictions on its monitoring or protection activities.

We all know that it may take months for such forces to be deployed. The Darfurians cannot wait another day. We therefore need the attacks to stop now.

Allow me also to make a few comments on the other part of my mission, regarding the Juba peace talks between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). I would like to thank the Council for its latest presidential statement on these talks (S/PRST/2006/45), as I believe that the current African-led peace mediation efforts in Juba provide a unique opportunity to bring the 20-year conflict with the LRA to an end. Except for small incidents, the cessation of hostilities has been respected, allowing hundreds of thousands of IDPs to start to return in northern Uganda. The hopes of millions of Ugandans rest on the outcomes at Juba.

At the same time, I was struck by the vulnerability of the peace process, which has made little substantial progress since the cessation of hostilities agreement in August. United Nations fund-raising for, and facilitation of, the peace talks was seen as critically important by all concerned. To date, six donors have committed $4.7 million to the Juba Initiative Project of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), while more are in the process of doing so. A good partnership between the Department for Political Affairs and OCHA in support of the Southern Sudanese mediation has been established.

Following his much publicized invitation, I met on 12 November with Joseph Kony of the LRA, his deputy Vincent Otti and other central commanders in the western assembly area of Ri-Kwangba, on the border of the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I was accompanied by the chief mediator, Vice-President Riek Machar of the Government of South Sudan, members of the peace mediation team, the Government of Uganda and representatives of civil society. Arriving at a clearing in the jungle after travel by air and by land, I was received by Vincent Otti, several members of his senior command and some 50 LRA fighters, many of them, seemingly, underage.

In our subsequent meeting, I urged Kony to move towards a speedy end to the conflict, to send senior commanders to the talks and to ensure the reassembly of LRA forces in the agreed areas. I reiterated our demand that they release abducted women and children and that they make a humanitarian gesture by allowing the wounded and sick to go to hospital. While, regrettably, still denying any abduction of children, Otti and Kony agreed that the LRA would indicate to us later this month the names of those who could be released into our care from LRA forces assembled in or around the eastern area of Owini Ki-Bul.

With regard to the peace process, both Otti and Kony complained about continued attacks and movements in Southern Sudan by the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), which was preventing LRA forces from moving into the agreed assembly areas, in particular in the east. I raised that issue with both the mediation team and President Museveni in Kampala. They only marginally raised the issue of the International Criminal Court. I emphasized the independence of the International Criminal Court and stated that peace could not take place without justice. This morning, Vincent Otti told me by satellite phone that they are in the process of reassembling and that they will respect the cessation of hostilities. He also agreed again to revert to the issue of releasing non-combatants into our care.

In my rare meeting with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), I was struck by the continued paranoia among the senior LRA leadership. It will therefore be critical for the peace process and the eventual process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to build confidence among the LRA through regular face-to-face meetings with representatives of the mediation team and of the international community. It also explains the disconnect between the series of general political demands of the LRA mediation delegation in Juba and the rather more immediate interest of the commanders in security arrangements.

In Kampala, I debriefed President Museveni on my meeting with the LRA leadership. I urged him to give the peace talks more time and to assist the process by withdrawing UPDF troops from positions that would make it more difficult for the LRA to assemble in Owiny Ki-Bul. President Museveni emphasized that the peace talks should not be an endless businesslike negotiation and that all LRA must move into the two agreed assembly areas for the ceasefire to be lasting.

In conclusion, I believe that the Juba peace process is the best hope ever to bring this cruel conflict to an end. The time is now. We must not let this unique opportunity slip away due to a wait-and-see attitude.

In my view the following steps are critical to support the admirable efforts of the mediation led by the Government of South Sudan. There must be continued funding for the mediation effort and for the ceasefire monitoring through the OCHA-led Juba Initiative Project. There must also be continued United Nations political assistance to the mediation, led by the Department for Political Affairs (DPA). The efforts for the cessation of hostilities monitoring team consisting of representatives of the parties and the mediators must be reinvigorated. Representatives of DPA and OCHA will participate as observers, and UNMIS will provide much-needed helicopter transport for the monitoring team. More permanent facilities in Ri-Kwangba are also needed to provide an opportunity for more regular meetings between the mediation team, the Government delegation and the LRA leadership. Finally, immediate assistance to assembly areas must be provided to make the current stand down attractive. Caritas Uganda is now providing food, water and health care inside the assembly areas.

Those are all ongoing vital efforts that, together with the Security Council's continued political support, should enable the peace talks with the LRA to make further progress and the nearly 2 million displaced persons in northern Uganda to return.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Egeland for his briefing.

I invite members of the Council who wish to take the floor to so indicate to the Secretariat.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Egeland for his sobering briefing and for his tireless efforts to keep the problems of Darfur and the problems associated with our desire to promote responsibility to protect at the forefront of the Security Council's business.

What he described was a very impressive amount of work on relief in the teeth of opposition on the ground. As he says, the crisis in Darfur has gone on far too long. Listening to him, I found myself horrified by the description of events in the camps and the attacks on civilians, but also mystified by the connection between the events he described on the ground and the political process that has been going on in Addis Ababa.

We were ready to welcome the agreement reached with the Government of the Sudan at last week's meeting in Addis and congratulate the Secretary-General and African Union Commission Chairperson Konaré for their efforts. But I would look forward this afternoon to hearing a little bit more about why, when the political process seems to be moving forward, events on the ground seem to be moving backwards. There is a linkage there that we have not fully got to the bottom of.

What it shows, I think, is that Thursday's breakthrough is fragile and that we need more elaboration on certain aspects from the Government of the Sudan. For the British Government's part, we will play whatever role we can in turning the Addis Ababa agreement into action. We look forward to the African Union leaders meeting later this month, and we hope that it will be able to endorse a concrete packet of measures that will contribute decisively to peace in Darfur. But as the Under-Secretary-General said today, unless they result in a change on the ground for the people who are suffering at the moment, those efforts will obviously be dissipated.

As I said, the situation that Mr. Egeland described, and its deterioration, are deeply worrying. It is hard to comprehend, given that everybody around this table and in the African Union has a desire to see the conflict ended and to have the humanitarian needs of the Sudanese people addressed, why fighting should be continuing in North Darfur, reportedly involving Government of the Sudan troops and air force. The fact that the attacks apparently disrupted a meeting of non-signatory rebel commanders discussing the Darfur Peace Agreement only makes it even more incomprehensible. We call on all sides to abide by the ceasefire.

Under-Secretary-General Egeland, you referred to the restrictions imposed by the Government of the Sudan on humanitarian agencies, which you experienced first-hand during your visit. We note the assurances that were obtained from the Government of the Sudan to extend the non-governmental organization visa moratorium to 2007. We urge the Government of the Sudan to deliver on those promises.

We also share your concern, Mr. Egeland, about the impact that the conflict in Darfur has on the wider

region, specifically on Chad and the Central African Republic. We hope that recommendations from the technical assessment mission currently on the ground will be made available to the Security Council as soon as possible.

I would like to turn briefly to northern Uganda. We are very grateful, again, to the Under-Secretary-General for his briefing and for the extraordinary efforts that he has made over the years to bring the humanitarian crisis there to world attention. The living conditions for the hundreds of thousands of people caught up in that humanitarian crisis remain dire. But the situation is improving, in large part because of the prospects for peace talks between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). It is all the more important therefore that those extra efforts to unblock the problems on the ground that the Under-Secretary-General described be pursued.

The presidential statement (S/PRST/2006/45) that we issued last week in support of the cessation of hostilities between the two parties needs to be followed up. We encourage all parties to work for a negotiated and peaceful outcome that is compatible with the wishes and needs of the local communities, but also compatible with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We welcome the support that the Secretariat and other parts of the United Nations family have been able to provide to the process. We would also like to note the work done by the Government of Uganda recently to seek to address the humanitarian situation in the north of the country, such as the development of the emergency humanitarian action plan and the draft peace, recovery and development plan now under discussion.

I would like to reserve comments about the peace process and Darfur and the African Union/United Nations force plans for our consultations this afternoon.

Mr. Gayama (Congo) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative to convene a meeting on this agenda item, at a time when the humanitarian situation has deteriorated in an unprecedented fashion across a good part of Africa, due to armed conflicts which are often associated with images and realities of a very tragic sort.

We cannot fail also to thank Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for the first-hand information that he has just made available to us. My delegation is grateful to him for his efforts to find solutions, which should be a source of inspiration to all of us in the political and technical efforts that we need to make in order to put an end to these situations, or at least to reduce their seriousness.

Obviously, the humanitarian situation, as it has just been explained to us, is sombre. Our optimistic assessments do not reflect the realities on the ground. As our colleague from the United Kingdom said, there seems to be a disconnect between the diplomatic and political optimism that has been expressed and the real situation — the situation as experienced, in particular, by displaced persons and refugees, who are the daily victims of acts of violence carried out for reasons that are unclear, especially in the case of Darfur and the Sudan.

As for Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army, we are happy to note that there has been a significant breakthrough with the implementation, on 29 August, of a ceasefire agreement, which was further extended on 1 November. This augurs well for peace and security in the Great Lakes region. However, we are waiting for the commitments made by the various actors to be translated into concrete actions. My delegation believes that the humanitarian issues relating to the women, children and non-combatants who are currently in the custody of the LRA will be resolved immediately and once and for all in the spirit of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005).

As I said earlier, my delegation is very concerned about the events that are unfolding in Darfur, where the prevailing conflict situation is threatening to destabilize the entire region. Eastern Chad — already burdened by more than 200,000 Sudanese refugees from neighbouring Darfur — is affected by the situation. An appeal has been made for an international presence to maintain security in that region, which also adjoins the Central African Republic. As Mr. Egeland has said, one of the most difficult aspects is the heavy price being paid by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and humanitarian workers, who are apparently being treated as persona non grata by the armed groups. That situation will require an extended and wide-ranging mobilization to enable NGOs and humanitarian workers to carry out their mission and to move throughout the entire region without restrictions.

Here, too, with respect to Darfur, the ceasefire, at least, must be complied with. The region must be able to implement the Abuja Peace Agreement for Darfur — if not in a comprehensive manner, at least gradually, by ensuring that the parties that did not sign the Agreement at least have the will to join.

Today, we are pinning our hopes on the outcome of the high-level meeting that took place in Addis Ababa on 16 November in which the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, took part. That meeting concluded that a joint United Nations-African Union force could be established to intervene in Darfur. We have waited too long for the implementation of such a formula to begin.

In this regard, we know that this afternoon we will hear more details about the situation regarding the Agreement. But we believe that at this stage, we have an opportunity — in the Council, at least — to try to implement some of the resolutions that we have adopted on Darfur. We will also have the opportunity to hear about ways in which the international community can support the African Union Mission in the Sudan, which is clearly overwhelmed by current events, the scope and multifaceted nature of which are such that there must be increased, greatly strengthened efforts on the part of the international community.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the African Union is still trying to convince the Government of the Sudan to join in the efforts that all the regional African communities are endeavouring to organize. In this regard, the African Union Peace and Security Council had planned to meet in Brazzaville, the capital of the Congo, on 24 November; that meeting will now take place on 29 November in Abuja, Nigeria. We expect important decisions to be taken at that meeting. We hope that the Government of the Sudan will give its consent so that we can give some substance to the conclusions that might be reached by the United Nations and by the African Union — the two organizations that are working with the Government of the Sudan. It is difficult to imagine that the Sudanese Government would not be able to respond to the ongoing appeals of the international community or that they could not give a positive interpretation of the fact that the international community is looking for a way to make the task of the Sudanese Government easier by giving people an opportunity to hope for a better life.

This is an interpretation that is shared by both the international community and the Government of the Sudan and we hope that, with solutions we could develop through political and diplomatic efforts, which are becoming more and more necessary at this time, that the heavy toll paid by innocent civilians, in particular in Darfur, will begin to mitigate.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I too would like to thank the President for convening this meeting. I would like to welcome the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Jan Egeland. We express our gratitude and appreciation of his regular reports and we hope that we will continue to have these meetings in the future.

Having carefully listened to his statement, we have a few brief comments. As regards Northern Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army's (LRA) activities, we are encouraged to hear his positive assessment of the negotiations in the Juba process. At the same time, it is important to reiterate the message sent by Mr. Egeland and which is in keeping with the President of the Council's message last week, encouraging the parties to increase their efforts to put an end to this long and painful conflict that has included some of the worst possible atrocities against the civilian population. The peace process should be brought to a conclusion as soon as possible. The parties must respect the ceasefire that has been agreed and the LRA should immediately release women, children and non-combatants.

We would like to take note of Joseph Kony's commitment to respond with concrete humanitarian measures and to identify the sick and wounded in a reasonable amount of time. If the international community is to continue this process, which is the best hope for peace, as Mr. Egeland has said, it is necessary for the LRA to keep its word and for the Government of Uganda to develop a programme of cooperation for the north of Uganda with the full participation of the affected communities.

I would like to conclude, highlighting once again that one of the fundamental elements of the process of reconciliation is accountability for those primarily responsible for massive violations of human rights. We cannot achieve peace at the expense of justice. Novel solutions will have to be found to bring together the

typical structures of reconciliation of the local population with international criteria.

As regards the situation in Darfur, there is very little to add to the dark and sad picture that has been described to us. If the Government of the Sudan does not allow Under-Secretary-General Egeland to visit particular areas of Darfur in view of security considerations, we may wonder what this means in terms of the security of the millions of internally displaced persons who have been chased from their homes? What can civilians hope for in their daily lives? What prospects are there for them if the very Government that has the primary responsibility for protecting them admits that certain places, places where these citizens live, are too dangerous?

Mr. Egeland clearly described the terror that prevails. We now have to rise to the level of our commitment and do more to protect the population in Darfur. These people have no one. They have no one. We cannot allow more civilians to die under the pretext of legitimate self-defence. We agree with Mr. Egeland that the Addis-Ababa agreement, about which the Secretary-General will brief us this afternoon, may be the start in a new direction to turn this painful situation around and may bring some comfort to the population in Darfur, in particular along the lines of humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our appreciation for the efforts led by Mr. Egeland to improve the situation of civilian populations. We value his commitment and we would like to reaffirm Argentina's commitment to the day-to-day work involved in protecting civilians in armed conflict.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I would like to begin by joining others in thanking Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his comprehensive briefing. Let me take this opportunity to comment on the situation in the Sudan and the recent positive developments with regard to the situation in Northern Uganda. All the while, I would like to underline that the humanitarian situations in a number of other countries in Africa also require the close attention of the international community.

One of the purposes of these humanitarian briefings is to have an opportunity for early warning regarding looming international crisis. In this perspective, it is deeply disturbing that today we are again receiving a briefing from Mr. Egeland, which concludes that the situation facing the civilian population in Darfur is still largely the same as three years ago. Only today, we have over 3 million people dependent on humanitarian assistance, an increase of more than 2 million over the past three years.

The situation in Darfur is unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue. A robust and efficient international force on the ground is the only way forward — a fact that has to be accepted by all. All efforts towards this goal must continue with a strong sense of urgency. The high-level consultation on the situation in Darfur, held last Thursday in Addis-Ababa, was a very important step to break the impasse with the Government of the Sudan regarding resolution 1706 (2006) and we look forward to being briefed in detail about the discussions at that meeting this afternoon.

The time between now and the meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council, to be held on 29 November in Abuja, must be used to intensify efforts to clear any additional issues standing in the way of our common goal, namely, to protect the lives of civilians in Darfur. We urge the regional Powers to stay engaged and to do their utmost to curb this threatening expansion of the conflict to a full-fledged regional conflict. All parties to the Tripoli and N'Djamena agreements must adhere to commitments made in these agreements.

Simultaneously, we must do everything possible to speed up the political process. Everyone with particular influence on key players must use their influence to the fullest. Broad acceptance of the Darfur Peace Agreement is a prerequisite for true progress and substantial improvement in the security situation.

On a much more positive note, I would like to welcome the cessation of hostilities agreement between Uganda and the rebels — the Lord's Resistance Army. The Juba peace talks represent an unprecedented opportunity to end the conflict, to bring a just and lasting peace to northern Uganda and to improve security throughout the region. We urge the parties to agree on a comprehensive settlement as soon as possible. We would like to commend the Government of the Southern Sudan for facilitating the peace talks and, likewise, to commend the Government of Uganda for the role it has played.

The negotiations will be difficult and setbacks are to be expected, but the international community should try everything to keep the talks alive by supporting the

mediators, by contributing to a conducive environment, which includes financial contributions, and by making sure that neither side will be given an alibi for walking away from the negotiation table.

To secure lasting peace, impunity must be addressed. As stated by Mr. Egeland, it is a delicate issue and one that will need our continued attention. The Government of Uganda must live up to its responsibility to find a solution consistent with its obligations under international law. The Security Council's adoption last week of a presidential statement on this matter (S/PRST/2006/45) is an important step in the right direction. We believe strong engagement by the United Nations will further stimulate the peace process.

Let me conclude by commending the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Mr. Egeland in particular for the active advocacy role they have played and they continue to play.

Ms. Wolcott Sanders (United States of America): I too want to thank Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his briefing on some of the continuing critical humanitarian challenges in Africa. We are grateful for his firsthand report on the initiative mediated by the Government of Southern Sudan to bring an end to the mayhem perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). We also thank him for his report on the precarious situation in Darfur. We appreciate Under-Secretary-General Egeland's intensive efforts to draw attention to these problems, including the restrictions imposed on those trying to deliver humanitarian assistance.

The United States supports the Juba peace process. We welcome the 1 November 2006 signing of the renewed Cessation of Hostilities Agreement first formulated on 26 August. We urge adherence to the Agreement as a step towards a peaceful solution to the longstanding conflict in northern Uganda.

The United States is providing considerable assistance to communities affected by the conflict. This has included $71 million this year to address the humanitarian crisis, peace initiatives, rehabilitation and development needs in northern Uganda. Much of this aid is food aid. The remainder focuses on HIV/AIDS programmes, antimalaria initiatives, education, training, and improving agricultural productivity. We will continue to assist the region, particularly as the internally displaced population returns home. Pending a successful peace agreement, we will support reconstruction efforts as well.

We are pleased that the international community has begun using the cluster approach in efforts to address the humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern Uganda. However, we believe better coordination is needed among Governments and agencies involved in these efforts.

Ending the violence in Darfur remains one of the highest priorities for the United States. We will continue to work closely with the United Nations, the African Union and our international partners to end the violence in Darfur, to hold individuals accountable for atrocities that have been committed and to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief. We hope the consensus reached at the 16 November meeting in Addis Ababa will lead to peace and security for the people of Darfur.

The United States provides significant humanitarian assistance to affected populations in Darfur and to Sudanese refugees in Chad. We also have funds in place to respond effectively should current refugee and IDP populations dramatically increase. In the last fiscal year, we provided over $500 million in humanitarian assistance in Darfur and eastern Chad. We are supporting numerous non-governmental organizations and international organizations that are providing assistance. These humanitarian activities range from food aid to psychological assistance for victims of trauma.

However, we remain convinced that this is not enough. In order to end the suffering and save lives in Darfur, an effective peacekeeping operation, as elaborated in Security resolution 1706 (2006), should be deployed under United Nations command and control.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): We thank Under-Secretary-General Egeland for his briefing. We also thank him for his unstinting efforts to keep the Council informed of the humanitarian situation in Africa and in other parts of the world and to address the practical problems in a very aggressive and constructive manner.

First, with regard to the situation in Darfur, we are seriously concerned about the continuation of the conflict and the deteriorating humanitarian situation, as reported in detail by Mr. Egeland. Attacks on innocent civilians continue, and serious violations of international humanitarian law abound. We strongly

urge all parties to ensure the protection of civilians. In order to ensure this, it is all the more vital to implement steadily, without delay, the principally agreed assistance to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) by the United Nations and others.

We recognize that the Addis Ababa meeting of 16 November 2006 marked an important step forward in building a cooperative relationship between the Government of Sudan and the international community, and we hope an agreement on the strengthened peacekeeping activity in Darfur will be reached through constructive dialogue soon. In this regard, we hope that the Peace and Security Council meeting to be held later this month will result in further advancing a political solution in Darfur.

We are also concerned about casualties and internally displaced persons (IDPs) newly generated by the intensifying conflict in Darfur. In order to manage this situation, we cannot accept the current situation, in which humanitarian assistance is being denied or access is being severely limited. The safety of the humanitarian personnel, as well access to the affected areas, should be secured.

Ensuring security is the first step for effective humanitarian assistance. The efforts to improve the humanitarian situation cannot be separated from the efforts on the political front — namely, securing a prompt cessation of hostilities, developing the political process, and putting in place effective peacekeeping activity. Also, it is vitally important for non-signatories to accede to the Darfur Peace Agreement that the Government of Sudan and the relevant countries are promoting. We strongly urge all the non-signatories to participate in this process.

For its part, Japan has worked with the Government of Sudan diplomatically through the dispatch in October of a special envoy of the Foreign Minister and also through the visit to Japan this month of Foreign Minister Lam Akol Ajawin. We will continue in our own efforts to work with the Government of Sudan to help bring about prompt political agreement and thereby improve the humanitarian situation in Darfur and consolidate peace. Japan will also consider positively further humanitarian assistance to the affected populations in Darfur.

With regard to northern Uganda, we commend the Emergency Relief Coordinator for his vigorous endeavours in assisting the peace talks in Uganda by meeting with President Museveni and the Lord's Resistance Army commander, Joseph Kony. Withdrawal of the Uganda Peoples Defence Force from the assembly points is a concrete outcome of these efforts, and we hope that such a withdrawal facilitates the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Government and the Lord's Resistance Army.

Although the progress of consultations is slow, we commend the persistent mediation efforts of the Government authorities of southern Sudan, and we hope that the Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team will continue to oversee closely the implementation of the Agreement.

Although it is difficult to be optimistic, bearing in mind past experience, we need to continue to work towards the success of these consultations in order not to miss the opportunity for peace. The Security Council adopted a presidential statement on 16 November (S/PRST/2006/45), and we need to continue to pay close attention to the situation.

In northern Uganda, Japan has also provided humanitarian assistance bilaterally and through international organizations, including the World Food Programme and UNICEF. It is encouraging to hear that the security situation in northern Uganda has drastically improved in recent months and that the return of IDPs has accelerated. We intend to consider further assistance in order to push this constructive movement forward.

We wish also to encourage the United Nations, which has a presence in northern Uganda, to strengthen its support to activate the Joint Monitoring Commission and also provide detailed and continuous information on the situation — here in New York and on the ground in Uganda.

In conclusion, we commend the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and in particular those of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Egeland, in aggressively dealing with the critical humanitarian situation in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting and also to thank Under-

Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his efforts and for his briefing.

I should like to make a few comments in relation to Darfur.

First, in terms of international humanitarian efforts, we are facing the threat of the withdrawal of a number of humanitarian organizations due to a lack of resources. The cost of operations on the ground is rising steadily, owing in particular to increased resort to air transport for the delivery of assistance. As Mr. Egeland noted, this is the largest humanitarian operation in the world, and its requirements are immense. We must therefore continue to support humanitarian workers there so that they can continue their work on the ground.

France would recall that it has already disbursed €76 million in bilateral and multilateral assistance for Darfur. Donors must continue their efforts, especially given that the hoped-for return of displaced refugees will also require targeted assistance for their reintegration, following the shock of having been displaced. In the early stages, they will have to be offered the same services as they receive in the camps.

My second point relates to our concern at the fresh deterioration of the situation in Darfur since September, in particular in the north-west. The situation, which was already tragic, is becoming untenable. There are a number of reasons for this: growing insecurity, continuing impediments to assistance, and the ongoing administrative restrictions on humanitarian assistance, which Mr. Egeland mentioned earlier.

In that context, my delegation would like to commend the work done in Darfur by the United Nations and in particular by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Thirdly, my delegation is pleased at the progress made at the Addis Ababa meeting last week as well as at the prospects for renewed dialogue on the question of Darfur. That meeting made it possible to reaffirm the common vision of the African Union and the United Nations. The two organizations are prepared to increase their efforts considerably in order to restore peace to the region and have adopted an original approach based on a joint commitment on the part of the two organizations over the long term.

The Security Council must ensure that the future peacekeeping presence, whatever its specific modalities, is able to contribute effectively to making civilian populations safer. My delegation expects the Sudanese Government to be diligent in dealing with the issues that arise out of the implementation of the outcome of the Addis Ababa meeting.

I should like also to make two key observations.

First, an expanded international peacekeeping presence can be fully effective only if the parties establish and implement a genuine ceasefire and resume the political process initiated by the Abuja Agreement.

Secondly, the Darfur crisis cannot be resolved without taking into account its regional implications in the Central African Republic and in Chad. We understand that this regional dimension was at the heart of the discussions that took place among the heads of the State of the region yesterday in Tripoli. We are also awaiting with interest the recommendations that the Secretary-General will submit to the Council in the near future regarding a United Nations presence in those areas of Chad and the Central African Republic bordering the Sudan.

On the question of Darfur, I would like to ask Mr. Egeland some questions on the issue he raised concerning the destruction of traditional structures. To what extent is that phenomenon widespread and advanced? How can the international community respond to the destruction of communities and of the country's economic fabric as a result of the conflict? Can those traditional structures, or what is left of them, serve, in some cases, as an effective channel for the distribution of assistance, or must we rely exclusively and directly on non-governmental and local organizations?

Finally, I should like to make a few brief comments on the situation in Uganda and on the Lord's Resistance Army.

First, France welcomes the renewal on 1 November of the ceasefire agreement between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). We also welcome the southern Sudanese mediation and the efforts made by Mr. Egeland to support it. The international community is now focusing on the two parties, which must translate into reality the hopes emanating from the Juba discussions.

France welcomes the improved humanitarian situation on the ground, the return of some of the displaced persons to their homes, and the establishment of a joint follow-up committee for the emergency plan.

The second point relates to Uganda and to non-combatants detained by the LRA and, specifically, to the situation of Acholi and Sudanese children who have not yet been returned to their families and whose early release is imperative. We urge the Government of Uganda and the LRA to cooperate fully with UNICEF and the High Commissioner on Human Rights, which are implementing on the ground resolution 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict. We ask them in particular to elaborate, jointly with UNICEF and the High Commissioner on Human Rights, action plans for the demobilization of all children. Children must be a priority for both parties, as they should be for the Council, which must remain focused on their situation through the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

Finally, I wish to emphasize, as several delegations did earlier, that the most serious crimes must not go unpunished. As Mr. Egeland stated, there can be no peace without justice.

Mrs. Papadopoulou (Greece): I should like to thank Mr. Egeland for his briefing on the humanitarian situation in Darfur and in northern Uganda and also for his intensive efforts, his advocacy role and his important work in the humanitarian field.

The mere fact that Mr. Egeland, the highest-ranking humanitarian United Nations official, had to cut his visit short because he was denied access to Jebel Marra, Tawilla and other areas demonstrates the complications involved with regard to humanitarian access. Four million people are in need of assistance, and such assistance must be granted to them. I agree with Mr. Egeland that now is the time to act.

In that regard, it is vital that the moratorium on restrictions on humanitarian workers in the Sudan be extended to and implemented in 2007. It is indeed very worrisome that certain humanitarian organizations, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council, have been forced to suspend their activities. On the positive side, we welcome the fact that the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs of the Sudan has agreed to work with the United Nations to lift the restrictions.

The agreement reached on Thursday in Addis Ababa must be used to make progress in the humanitarian sphere. Interpretations or misinterpretations of what was agreed should stop, and final agreement must be confirmed by the next meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council.

The re-energized African force should protect civilians and enable security for humanitarian workers and others. In that context, I consider the recommendation made by Mr. Egeland today to be particularly pertinent.

We support the Juba peace process, and we believe it constitutes a real breakthrough that could bring an end to a long and particularly brutal conflict.

We also consider Mr. Egeland's meeting with Joseph Kony a breakthrough. It was the first time that the international community had the opportunity to impress upon the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) the importance of humanitarian issues. We hope that during the follow-on information expected today progress will be made in coping with the grave problems created by LRA actions in the area.

In our view, the most crucial issue in the months to come for northern Uganda will be to find a way to reconcile the need for peace with combating impunity and respecting the International Criminal Court process. In the short term, regional actors and the international community should spare no effort to ensure that resources are adequately allocated to northern Uganda, including for humanitarian efforts and for the sustainable reintegration of the population affected by conflict. In that respect, we commend the Government of Uganda for its recovery and development plan for the area.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): We too would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Egeland for his important briefing.

We are deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Darfur and the increasing number of internally displaced persons (IDP) and refugees without humanitarian access due to new attacks and the criminal activities of armed militias in the area, including inside and around refugee camps in Darfur and eastern Chad. We are horrified by the news from Darfur about a new wave of violence against civilians.

In that regard, we deplore the failure of the Government of the Sudan to protect its citizens and to address the impunity of perpetrators. We agree with Mr. Egeland that all the necessary measures should be undertaken to stop all attacks and to re-establish the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities before an entire generation of young men is enlisted in the fighting, thereby increasing humanitarian suffering and escalating the conflict into a major regional catastrophe and confrontation.

We also call upon the Government of the Sudan to remove all bureaucratic obstacles to the continuation of the efforts of humanitarian workers and agencies that are helping to alleviate the suffering of 4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. We hope that the Government of the Sudan will understand that the cooperation and active engagement of the international community in addressing the crisis in Darfur is in the best interest of all the Sudanese people and citizens.

In that context, we remain convinced that a speedy and robust response from the international community is needed to help the Sudanese people and authorities address the deteriorating situation on the ground and to bring the peace process based on the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement back on track.

In that respect, we welcome the agreement on a hybrid African Union/United Nations operation that was achieved last week in Addis Ababa. At the same time, we call upon all stakeholders to continue to cooperate in a good and constructive spirit to resolve all outstanding issues, in order to deploy a credible peacekeeping force that is able and capable of protecting civilians and securing adequate conditions for the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement as soon as possible.

Turning briefly to the situation in northern Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), we are encouraged by the progress made in the peace talks between the Government of Uganda and the LRA, as well as in addressing the situation on the ground, including the improved humanitarian access to IDPs in northern Uganda. At the same time, we agree with Mr. Egeland that the active engagement of the international community is crucial and that it should continue to ensure that the Juba peace process produces concrete results in terms of bringing this cruel conflict to an end and allowing the nearly 2 million displaced persons i northern Uganda to return to their homes.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that w would welcome regular updates by the Secretariat o developments in northern Uganda. We believe that th Security Council must continue its active role i support of the peace process begun at Juba.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): A the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary General Egeland for his briefing. We believe tha Mr. Egeland's visit to northern Uganda and Darfu once again focused increased attention by th international community on the situation in the regio His briefing indicated that the humanitarian situation i Darfur and northern Uganda remains serious. Th Security Council should continue to pay attention t the humanitarian situation in those two region Moreover, we should intensify efforts to resolve th problems in those areas. The humanitarian, politic and security issues are interrelated and affect on another. The absence of the necessary stability makes difficult to fundamentally alleviate the humanitaria crisis.

Turning to the situation in northern Uganda, a adequate resolution to the question of the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) will have a major impact o the situation in northern Uganda and the stability of th entire country. China welcomes last August's signin of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities betwee the Ugandan Government and the LRA. We expect t see the implementation of the relevant provisions o the Agreement.

We appreciate the efforts of the Office for th Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to raise funds fo the peace talks and to provide assistance and suppo for the secretariat of the peace talks and the monitorin group on the cessation of hostilities. We hope that th Government of Uganda and the representatives of th LRA will quickly reach agreement on the releva political issues, make progress in the peace talks an achieve positive results.

China is concerned about the humanitaria situation in Darfur, the Sudan, as well as along th border between the Sudan and Chad. Fundamental alleviating the humanitarian situation depends upo restoring security and making progress in the peac process. We appeal to the Government of the Suda and the parties concerned to provide assistance an

access to humanitarian workers. Important consensus in that regard was recently reached at the high-level talks in Addis Ababa.

We are aware that the African Union's Peace and Security Council has also taken important decisions with regard to resolving the problem of Darfur. We hope that all parties will seize this rare historic opportunity to step up consultations and make progress on a proper and comprehensive resolution to the issue of Darfur. We also hope that the humanitarian situation will improve as the process to achieve a political settlement in Darfur is accelerated.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): I too would like to thank Mr. Egeland very much for his latest report on the humanitarian situation in Africa with a focus on Darfur and the Juba peace talks. We are touched by the commitment and passion which have consistently characterized his work as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. He has inspired many to action, but, as he showed, many challenges remain and, in some cases, some situations have deteriorated.

The current situation in Darfur is reminiscent of what it was in 2004 and 2005, and it is getting worse. The Government's military actions and the activities of the militias have continued unabated. In some cases, they have continued with impunity. It is instructive to recall that in the course of 2005 the Security Council adopted two important resolutions to facilitate the peace process in Abuja and the humanitarian work in Darfur. The Council has an obligation to revisit those resolutions and try to create a new consensus to advance the peace process, to protect civilians and to assist and protect humanitarian action in Darfur.

The Darfur peace process was far from perfect and the Agreement is certainly not the best one. Its implementation prospects are receding. However, it is the only framework for a multilateral and multiparty solution. The Security Council, in partnership with the other stakeholders, especially the African Union, should try to rescue the Agreement. Short of this, it will give the Government of the Sudan an excuse for unilateral military action in place of recourse to a political process. The Council should be mindful of the need to work very closely with the African Union in order to see how the Peace Agreement can be rescued.

The African Union peace mission in Darfur is still operating essentially on the terms of the N'Djamena cessation of hostilities agreement and has not been enabled to engage in the implementation of the Abuja peace process. The mandate of the African mission in Darfur has been extended several times, but its operational mandate has not been substantially revised or enhanced. The renewed discussions among the African Union, the United Nations, the Sudan and other stakeholders in Addis Ababa should be an opportunity to build much-needed confidence to make a breakthrough in addressing the situation of the implementation of the Abuja peace process, or the Darfur peace process.

The security of the camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Darfur and the refugee camps in Chad need to receive special attention. As the fragmentation of warring parties continues, there is a great risk of these parties seeking bases in the refugees camps and IDP camps. This could further exacerbate the tense situation existing between the Sudan and Chad, and between the Sudan and the Central African Republic. It is important therefore that as we consider the overall security of the camps, we should also consider this regional dimension.

Under Mr. Egeland's leadership, world opinion has been sensitized to the situation in Darfur, as we see advertisements in major world newspapers and rallies around the world to support the cause of Darfurians. Mr. Egeland has mobilized resources for the largest humanitarian operation in the world today. He has encouraged coordinated action by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations with the Central Emergency Relief Fund. The report on system-wide coherence in humanitarian action should further enhance coordination within the United Nations humanitarian community. The Security Council should provide the needed political support for these initiatives which Mr. Egeland started.

Turning to the Juba peace talks, we congratulate Mr. Egeland on his success in meeting with Joseph Kony and Vincent Otti. It is normally not very easy to meet with these kinds of people. It takes a lot of planning and courage. We hope that Mr. Egeland will continue to engage in dialogue with them, especially on the outstanding humanitarian issues, in particular the question of women and children abductees.

We have come a long way. This opportunity should not slip away from us again. These talks are qualitatively different from previous ones. Having the

Government of Southern Sudan as a facilitator makes a big difference. The involvement of the United Nations and the international community assures that these talks receive attention and the necessary support. There has to be peace and justice. The two should not be mutually exclusive. Impunity should not be allowed, but the issues have to be handled tactfully, without compromising the strategic objectives of peace and justice.

The international community should work closely with the Government of Uganda and all other stakeholders to address the humanitarian situation in northern Uganda, and also to contain the situation from becoming what it used to be in terms of a regional challenge.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Egeland for his briefing on developments in the humanitarian situation in Darfur and in northern Uganda. We would also like to thank him for his efforts to deal with the humanitarian situation throughout the area. It is regrettable to see the deterioration of the situation in both areas, as described by Mr. Egeland in his briefing, in particular the impact of this deterioration on women and children, the two groups most vulnerable to insecurity and instability.

In his statement, Mr. Egeland referred to the Addis Ababa agreement between the African Union and the Government of the Sudan and the positive impact of that agreement. We hope that the agreement will last and that it will make it possible for peace and stability to reign once again in Darfur and for the situation of refugees and the displaced persons to be resolved. My delegation looks forward to the Secretary-General's report on the agreement, which is to be introduced this afternoon in our informal consultations.

As regards the peace process for northern Uganda, we affirm the importance of Mr. Egeland's recommendations, in particular regarding the need to support and assist in the ongoing negotiations between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in order to attain permanent peace in northern Uganda. We also welcome the Juba peace process, which we view as the cornerstone of the ceasefire between the Ugandan Government and the LRA. We cannot fail to thank the Government of Southern Sudan for its mediation and for facilitating meetings between the parties.

Mr. Yankey (Ghana): I thank Under-Secretary-General Egeland for his update. I wish to commend him on his tireless efforts to ensure that the plight of the millions of displaced people in Darfur continues to receive the attention it deserves. We further welcome his positive assessment of the negotiations between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda and his recommendations in that regard. We share the view that without justice there can be no lasting peace and stress the need to uphold the independence of the International Criminal Court.

The Emergency Relief Coordinator has been very clear about the urgency with which the impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance must be addressed, even as the consultations on implementing the Darfur Peace Agreement and the related deployment of a peacekeeping mission in Darfur continue. The tragic irony about the situation in Darfur is that the flow of arms and those engaging in war crimes and crimes against humanity enjoy more freedom than do those engaged in saving lives. It is for the Council to draw its own conclusions about the motives and intentions behind the deliberate imposition of restrictions on humanitarian relief.

Mr. Egeland, who is very familiar with the daily reality in the IDP camps, has strongly emphasized that the time available to avert a looming disaster in Darfur is very limited. We must decide on the appropriate response. I have a question that is just a matter of detail. We are interested to know from the Emergency Relief Coordinator whether there are any up-to-date records on the number of deaths that have occurred in the IDP camps. In most reports one still sees the figure of 200,000, or sometimes 300,000. Are there any up-to-date records on the number of deaths?

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too wish to thank Mr. Egeland for his briefing, which as usual was very thorough, on the results of his last trip to Sudan and northern Uganda, and for his ongoing steps, together with his team, to manage humanitarian cooperation and to promote normalization of the humanitarian situation in those very complex regions. Of course, we would expect that the humanitarian activity of the United Nations, both in those regions and overall in the African continent, will continue. We support that activity, because it is a very

important element in promoting normalization of the situation and a political settlement.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the main reason for the unfortunate humanitarian situation is the fact that the conflicts are still unresolved. Mutual influence is the connection, for there is no doubt that progress towards a political settlement would have a positive impact in managing the humanitarian situation, whether in the Sudan, in northern Uganda or in other crisis areas.

With respect to the Sudan, I do not wish to pre-empt the Council's discussion later today. We are awaiting with great interest the statement by the Secretary-General on the results of the very important meeting on Darfur that took place in Addis Ababa. I just wish to say here that the agreements achieved there need to be strengthened and to be implemented appropriately, with the United Nations playing a very active role and with interaction with the African Union.

I do not wish to repeat what was said with respect to the characteristics of the humanitarian situation; there is no doubt that it remains very complicated. Without doubt the Government of the Sudan and all other parties must fully comply with their obligations in ensuring necessary access for humanitarian organizations and the safety of their personnel; they must cooperate with the humanitarian staff. There is no doubt about that.

It is also very important to ensure strict compliance by all parties with the ceasefire agreement. Unfortunately, we have seen a continuation of hostilities, and certainly that situation does not facilitate any advance on the political track. We would expect that any momentum provided by the agreement in principle in Addis Ababa will be further strengthened and will have a positive effect on the work of international humanitarian agencies in Darfur and on the humanitarian situation overall.

With respect to northern Uganda, I wish to support my colleagues in the Council in noting the need to continue the peace process with the successful mediation of the Government of Southern Sudan. Of course, all those humanitarian tasks that remain in this context, which are being resolved with useful cooperation by the United Nations, must be dealt with, and relevant efforts must continue.

We were pleased to hear that Mr. Kony has made the appropriate pledges that due attention will be paid to humanitarian issues, most of all with regard to returning to the United Nations all non-combatants being held by the Lord's Resistance Army. This is very important, and we hope that this matter will be resolved.

Once again I wish to say we deeply appreciate the work done by United Nations humanitarian staff and by Mr. Egeland personally. We take it that progress in all the areas indicated will be strengthened. The Council will of course continue to give all those matters the necessary attention.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

First, I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Egeland, for the candid presentation he has given us. He depicted the tragedy, the fear, the insecurity that so many millions of human beings are suffering, victims of the crisis in Sudan. I wish to express to him the promise of Peru's unvarying support to him and to his office for their work in attending to crises of this type throughout the world.

I will start by discussing the situation in the Sudan, and more specifically in Darfur. We share Mr. Egeland's concern that the situation of insecurity in that area has worsened and that access to humanitarian assistance grows increasing difficult and risky. Confronted with this scenario, it is urgent for the international community, especially the Security Council, to take an effective decision that will protect civilians by intensifying dialogue in order to achieve an end to hostilities and the longed-for resolution of the crisis in Darfur.

We believe that in order to decisively change the direction of events in Darfur, the Government of National Unity in Sudan must accept the initiatives being discussed in order to arrive at a viable political process based on consultation and dialogue.

The Government must also accept the deployment of a credible and sufficiently large peacekeeping force with a robust and wide-ranging mandate with a view to consolidating the agreements reached at the political level, thus protecting the civilian population, which is victim of the rebels, the Janjaweed and the security forces.

As regards the Juba peace process, it is important to highlight the achievements made — in particular, the ceasefire agreement and the protocol. We hope that the parties will honour their commitments and that the calm that has returned to northern Uganda after so many years continues. In this regard, we join with those who have thanked the Government of Southern Sudan for acting as mediator in the peace talks. We believe that this process should contribute to putting an end to impunity for the serious crimes that have been committed. It must also lead to a situation in which the Ugandan Government, with the help of the international community, sets in motion an all-inclusive process to address the root causes of the conflict, in particular the extreme poverty and social marginalization of communities in northern Uganda.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Mr. Jan Egeland has asked to make some final comments. I give him the floor.

Mr. Egeland (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like respond briefly to the comments of Council members.

(*spoke in English*)

First, on northern Uganda, indeed, I think that no one expected the talks to produce the kind of security improvements that they did produce when they started as an initiative of Riek Machar and the South Sudanese Government. But the reality is that we have had the best period in half a generation in terms of security in northern Uganda, and that one of the three or four worst humanitarian crises of this decade can be brought to an end. Hundreds of thousands are preparing to return in the next few months, if the ceasefire, or the cessation of hostilities, holds and we make further progress in the peace process.

That is why it is so important that you continue the tension, you continue the investment, directly and through the United Nations, in this process; it must become a priority of yours. We must make it as attractive as possible for the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to stand down, demobilize, disarm and reintegrate, and we must make it as unattractive as possible for the LRA and for the Government forces to break the ceasefire and return to conflict. I think the conflict could become even worse than it was before. We should be under no illusions that the LRA cannot again cause terror across a large area.

On Darfur, the representative of Ghana asked about figures regarding humanitarian suffering on the ground. The most difficult figure is the one that we are frequently asked to give — the number of people who have died. Estimates range widely. The large-scale survey that we had in mid-2004 concluded that, of the 1 million people affected at the time, there were 10,000 extra deaths per month. Since then, the number of those affected has grown from 1 million to 4 million. Two million of those are displaced persons, and the other 2 million are people who have been severely affected by the fighting. It is impossible for us to give a figure of how many have died, except to say that we know that, within the camps, the humanitarian effort has been hugely successful and we are now clearly below the mortality rates of 2004. I mentioned that is the figure now — or was, in August — about 0.4 deaths per 10,000 per day. The emergency threshold is one per 10,000 — and it was above two per 10,000 in 2004, that is, twice the emergency threshold.

However, since August mortality has increased, malnutrition has increased and the crisis has increased. Displacement has increased. The number of attacks and the number of people killed has increased. And in each of these attacks — and I mentioned several — a dozen, or several dozen, innocent civilians are killed.

The number of refugees now in Chad is about 230,000, but the number of internally displaced persons in Chad has grown by many tens of thousands of late — it has grown even more than the number of refugees. It is so bad now in areas of eastern Chad that people are fleeing to Darfur. It has to be pretty bad in eastern Chad if people are fleeing to Darfur, given how it is there at the moment.

China observed, very correctly, that the humanitarian situation depends on progress on the security front and on the peace front, which the Council will be discussing this afternoon. Indeed, if the situation deteriorates further on the security front, if we do not make progress in the peace talks, the whole humanitarian operation could falter. That is my main message today. A lot is at stake. The lifeline to 3 million to 4 million people is really in danger for all of the reasons that I have mentioned.

What we fear now is that a lot of time will be lost before serious peace deals are made and before we get the security force on the ground that could protect the civilian population.

Today, the reality is that the women come to me and say, "Thank you for the blankets, thank you for the Band-Aids, thank you for our daily bread. But what we really need now is security. When night falls, there is nobody there. You are not there, as humanitarian workers. African Union soldiers are not there. Government protection is not there. There is nobody when armed men now increasingly infiltrate our camps or attack our communities."

At times, I have felt that perhaps the talks among those who can decide on peace, who can decide on security, should not take place in hotel rooms in capital cities, but should take place in one of the camps. Dorti would be a good case in point — that is a camp that everybody had to leave because it was so bad. The negotiators — those who have authority on all of these questions — should bring their families, their children and their wives. Then I think we would have much more progress, much more quickly, on all of those issues.

I would urge those who can influence the situation — the Asian countries, the Arab countries, the Islamic countries, the African countries, as well as the donor countries — to help to influence the Government, all parts of government, the rebels, everybody, to make concessions. There must be massive international pressure now on the parties, because, as was observed by several speakers, including the representative of the United Kingdom and others, there is a very real disconnect between what I saw on the ground and what comes out of many of the meetings, including the Addis Ababa meeting, which was a great success and where there was a declared commitment. The reality is that in recent days it has deteriorated. That was also the reality after the Abuja Agreement and the Abuja talks. This time it has to be different — we have to see a real change on the ground, and people must be made accountable for what they do and what they do not do, whether they are on this or that side. But, I certainly agree with Russia and others to say that of course the Government has a particular responsibility now to protect the civilian population, and the Government, as it now acts, is not doing what it could do to protect the civilian population of its own country, the Sudan.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank Mr. Egeland for his presentation and his replies and clarifications.

The Security Council has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.